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PAHAYAGAN NG PARTIDO KOMUNISTA NG PILIPINAS  
PINAPATNUBAYAN NG  
MARXISMO-LENINISMO-MAOISMO

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Editorial

## Thoroughly expose, oppose and isolate the reactionary, puppet and fascist US-Estrada regime



**T**he political crisis is fast intensifying even as the socio-economic crisis continues to rage. The massive protest action held on August 20 by broad sections of the progressive and democratic forces is proof of the people's intense discontent, the broadening protest movement and the sharpening rivalries among reactionaries. Behind this event is a most intense crisis made even worse by the reactionary, puppet, fascist and pro-Marcos policies of the ruling US-Estrada regime.

Under these conditions, it is the Party's duty to lead the people by marching at their forefront and pointing out to them the correct revolutionary path. With all our might, let us resist the US-Estrada regime's schemes and attacks, advance guerrilla warfare and mass struggles and protests and broaden the unity of the people—in accordance with the anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist line.

The gigantic August 20 rally would not have taken place if not for the concerted efforts of a broad range of elements led by the most respected institutions and personalities who are widely influential among the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the full mobilization of the legal progressive forces who comprised the biggest organized group.

But at the very center of the sharpening political crisis and the resurgence of the protest movement is the restrengthening of the armed revolution and revolutionary mass movement consequent to the Second Great Rectification Movement. It is the renewed expansion and strengthening of the independent force and struggle of the revolutionary movement that provide the broad masses with the fortitude to stand up and fight, sharpen rivalries among reactionaries and drive the ruling regime to resort to more desperate measures that can only accelerate its exposure and isolation stemming from its reactionary, puppet

and fascist rule and policies.

Thus, we must steadfastly march with all genuinely progressive and positive forces. Alongside, let us also further the revolutionary movement's all-sided restrengthening and advance the line of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. These two policies are strictly intertwined, notwithstanding the efforts of rabid reactionaries and anticommunists (including revisionists and opportunist renegades) to pit one against the other.

As the political crisis intensifies, the ruling US-Estrada regime likewise intensifies its anticommunist witch-hunting and attacks. The ruling regime's divisive tactics have been most conspicuous as it dangled a compromise before anti-Estrada and anti-Marcos reactionaries even as it slandered, sowed intrigues against and violently attacked, the revolutionary movement. The latter includes hatching the grandiose militarist scheme Oplan Makabayan in order to wage an all-out attack against the armed revolution and "crush" it.

We enthusiastically welcome the substantial advance of the people's protest movement and the intensifying opposition shown by reactionaries disfranchised by the ruling US-Estrada regime. We firmly welcome the sharpening of contradictions between revolution and counterrevolution, fascism and antifascism, pro-Marcos and anti-Marcos, pro-Estrada and anti-Estrada. We are prepared to advance and intensify widespread struggles until the overthrow of the ruling Estrada regime. **AB**

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# August 20: A gathering storm against the US-Estrada clique

**More than 230,000 people poured out to the streets of Makati City and other places nationwide to assail rising fascism and to gather the brewing tempest against the ruling Estrada clique. Behind these successful demonstrations is the close cooperation of the militant organizations of the toiling masses, petty bourgeois organizations, the leadership of and organizations under the Catholic church and anti-Estrada elements led by Corazon Aquino.**

According to reports, close to 150,000 joined demonstrations held in the cities of Bacolod (60,000), Davao (40,000), Cebu (15,000), Lucena (10,000), Iloilo (8,000), Legazpi (5,000), Kabankalan (5,000) and in the town of Digos, Davao del Sur (5,000).

Thousands likewise participated in simultaneous protest actions held in different cities and towns across the archipelago. In Luzon, rallies were held in Ilocos Sur, La Union, in the cities of Baguio and Dagupan; in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya; in San Fernando and Angeles City in Pampanga; in Baler, Aurora; Daet, Camarines Norte; Naga and Iriga, Camarines Sur; and in Sorsogon. In the Visayas, several thousands also marched in the cities of San Carlos and Dumaguete in Negros; in Kalibo, Aklan; and in the cities of Ormoc and Tacloban in Leyte. In Mindanao, thousands gathered in the cities of Iligan, Cagayan de Oro, Kidapawan and General Santos.

## The Estrada government is inciting widespread mass protests and resistance

The continually worsening crisis of the ruling system and the brazen puppetry and fascism of the US-Estrada regime spur intensifying people's resistance in the cities and in the countryside. There is a gathering storm born of the people's widespread struggles to oust the reactionary Estrada regime.

Along with the intensifying armed struggle in the countryside, the wave of massive demonstrations will deal heavy blows against the Estrada regime. There is need to further expand and strengthen the antifascist

front, call its attention to and focus its efforts towards ousting the ruling Estrada clique and replacing it with a government of national unity and people's democracy.

Estrada further intensifies the people's seething anger by

- planning to change the constitution of the Republic of the Philippines to worsen its antinational provisions and cancel the legacy of the antifascist struggle;
- suppressing freedom of the press and trampling on human rights;
- orchestrating the return of the Marcoses and the minions of the Marcos dictatorship; and
- propagating and exacerbating corruption and the merging of criminal syndicates and bureaucrats.

In their scheme to change the constitution, Estrada and his ilk are planning the wholesale auction of the national patrimony and whatever is left of the Philippines' economic sovereignty to foreign monopoly capitalists. In this regard, the regime intends to grant foreigners unlimited rights to own real estate and banks as well as mass media, telecommunications, retail and other enterprises. In addition, Estrada will wield autocratic power in entering into treaties and contracts with foreigners free from public scrutiny, including review by courts.

In the name of "economic reforms", Estrada and his minions plan to abrogate the bill of rights born out of the antifascist struggles against the Marcos dictatorship. Estrada wishes to obliterate those provisions that ensure the rights to organize, assemble and to strike, which are portrayed as anti-investments and disincentives to the entry of foreign business to the country. His objective is to give his fascist minions full license to seize property, make arbitrary arrests and perpetrate killings, massacres and other human rights violations in line with his directive to "crush" the revolution and in his bid to exterminate the political opposition in the style of his mentor, Marcos.

Estrada's insistence that changes in the constitution will be limited to these "economic reforms" serves as a smokescreen for the agenda of rewriting those provisions that bar Estrada and other politicians from extending their term limits.

To suppress criticism and protests against anti-democratic and pro-foreign government policies, Estrada has muzzled the mass media. Through means reminiscent of Marcos, he pressured the owners of *Manila Times* to sell the newspaper after its disclosure of questionable contracts to which Estrada gave his blessing. Estrada is likewise resorting to underhanded schemes to bring the *Philippine Daily Inquirer* to its knees after its exposure of anomalous contracts and irregularities in the government; and to force other newspapers to toe

Estrada's line.

Estrada is also inciting the people's widespread anger by coddling and opening wide the door towards the full rehabilitation of the Marcos family and the minions of the Marcos dictatorship. Estrada and the Marcos family are colluding to hide and divide among themselves the \$13-billion ill-gotten wealth deposited in the Union Bank of Switzerland. This is aside from Estrada's conspiracy with Eduardo Cojuangco Jr. to allow the latter to keep all the property he amassed through the ill-gotten P100-billion coco levy fund.

Bureaucratic corruption and irregularities have reached scandalous proportions. Foremost is the anomalous return of the Marcoses and their minions and the secret deals they have been forging with Estrada on the disposition of their ill-gotten wealth. Numerous cases have been exposed involving bribery, favors granted to Estrada's friends and relatives in the awarding of big public works contracts and the use of public funds from agencies like the SSS and GSIS for private businesses. The people's anger further seethes as they witness the coordination of the highest-ranking police and military officers with criminal lords to protect the operations of syndicates involved in illegal gambling, drug trafficking and smuggling.

### Unite further in the September 21 rally

Estrada's refusal to heed the demands raised in the August 20 rally impels the people to hold bigger demonstrations on September 21.

The August 20 rallies were successful despite Estrada's attempts to stop them through dirty tricks and by whipping up anticommunist hysteria. But in order to foil Estrada's scheme of ramming down the people's throats the anti-democratic and antinational changes in the constitution and continually trampling on political, economic, social and civil rights, there is need to continue broadening the unity of ever-widening sections of the people and further intensify mass protests.

There is need to continue and further enhance the cooperation of militant organizations with genuinely progressive and positive forces, respected institutions and disfranchised sections of the ruling class on the basis of a united stand against fascism. There is ►

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# Conflicts among reactionaries will sharpen over the issue of constitutional change

Estrada's bullheadedness on rewriting the constitution of the reactionary state despite widespread opposition to this move is further sharpening conflicts among rival reactionary factions. Anti-Estrada reactionaries are aware that Estrada's constant assurance that changes in the constitution will be limited to economic provisions camouflages the intention of Estrada and his minions to sneak in amendments granting them greater political power and privilege.

A major political crisis of the ruling system is abrewing, centering on Estrada's position as president of the reactionary state.

The anti-Estrada reactionaries' claim that their opposition to constitutional change does not mean that they are against Estrada is meant to dissimulate their real objective of convincing the pro-Estrada reactionaries to make a stand against rewriting the constitution. But in the face of Estrada's adamance and consolidation of his camp, the anti-Estrada reactionaries will have to shed their masks if they are determined to thwart the moves to change the constitution and defend their own interests.

Estrada has reestablished LAMP (Lapian ng Masang Pilipino) to prepare for "major political battles". He wants to be certain that the members of LAMP would toe the line and push for the rewriting of the constitution. At present, Estrada is making sure that the leadership and the majority in both Congress and the Senate can be counted on as loyal underlings who will railroad the amendments despite strong opposition.

It has been clear even from the very onset of Estrada's term that conflicts among reactionaries would further sharpen. The worsening social crisis is forcing the reactionaries to resort to desperate measures and scramble for control over businesses and choice

bureaucratic positions.

Two big reactionary camps are currently at loggerheads. By and large, these are the pro-Marcos and anti-Marcos camps. The ruling Estrada clique is the principal representative of the first camp. It is the Estrada clique that has coddled and opened wide the doors to the full restoration to power of the Marcoses and their recovery or preservation of their ill-gotten wealth. The camp comprises the Marcos family and the minions of the Marcos dictatorship who have been rehabilitated through Estrada.

On the other side is the anti-Marcos camp consisting of reactionaries who were disfranchised by Marcos from 1972 to 1986, assumed power in 1986 but are now being left out in the cold once more by the ruling clique.

The relentless efforts of the ruling Estrada clique to disfranchise the other sections of the ruling classes and its cornering of privileges and state power *a la* Marcos are compelling the anti-Estrada/Marcos camp to actively assume the role of a political opposition. With the diminishing room for maneuver for the anti-Estrada/Marcos elements, they are anxious about being ultimately deprived of their rights and property by a Marcos-style Estrada monopolization of state power.

The conflict among reactionaries over the question of constitutional change is a positive development for the revolutionary movement. This should be taken advantage of in order to weaken the ruling reactionary clique. It is to the interest of the anti-Estrada/Marcos reactionaries to be part of a broad people's antifascist front. It is correct for progressive and militant forces to be open to cooperating with these elements with the objective of opposing and defeating the anti-democratic schemes of the Estrada regime. **AB**

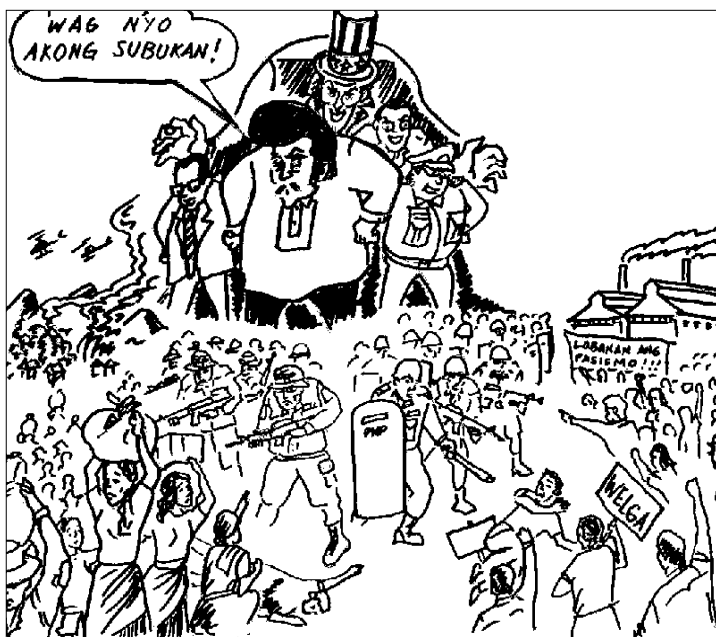
◀ need to thwart Estrada's attempts to divide the antifascist united front through threats and bribes.

Serving as the solid core of this united front are the militant organizations of the toiling masses, especially those of the workers, which constituted the biggest organized group in the August 20 rally. The perseverance of militant workers and the toiling masses in opposing oil price hikes, struggling for wage increases and resisting other policies



that are a burden to them emboldens and raises the fighting spirit of the antifascist front.

It is the Party's task to march at the lead of the united front of anti-Estrada forces and oppose the anti-democratic and antipeople schemes of Estrada while intensifying the guerrilla war in the countryside and strengthening and expanding the people's unity to achieve the revolutionary transformation of society. **AB**



Oplan Makabayan:

# Fascist scheme of the US-Estrada regime

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**I**n Estrada's rabidly reactionary and narrow-minded view, anything short of a brutal approach to a people waging revolution is called "babying". Thus in September 1998, as soon as he took the reins of power in Malacañang, Estrada immediately geared into action the militarist policy and scheme Oplan Makabayan (OPMAK) to wage an all-out military offensive to "crush" the revolutionary movement—even if, for a time, he was obliged to make a show of respecting the then ongoing peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front.

Worse, Estrada's militarism and fascism against the revolutionary movement are an integral part of the reactionary and puppet agenda that wagers on complete servility to US imperialism and foreign monopoly capital and the restoration to power of the Marcoses and the worst of their minions. Obsolete rhetoric that whips up anticommunist hysteria is being reechoed to justify and cover up this brazenly reactionary, puppet and pro-Marcos policy.

Behind this policy is the intense desire to grab a share in the multi-billion peso Marcos loot, monopolize the privileges and benefits of power and protect their faction's hold on power—while defending the rotten semicolonial and semifeudal ruling system in the face of grave crisis and the continued restrengthening of the revolutionary movement.

## OPMAK

Estrada's Oplan Makabayan (OPMAK) presents a distinctive shift from Ramos' Oplan Kaisaganaan. Although just as reactionary and counter-revolutionary, Oplan

Kaisaganaan attempted to expand on political methods of dismantling the revolutionary movement even as it called for unrelenting military offensives against the guerrilla fronts of the New People's Army (NPA). It exploited the grave setbacks suffered by the Party and the movement due to the serious internal deviations and errors perpetrated by revisionists and opportunist renegades, as well as the temporary financial and commercial upswing brought about by the influx of foreign speculative capital into the country.

Ramos imagined that it would not be long before the revolutionary movement would be completely destroyed. The armed revolution was dismissed as a dwindling problem for the police. "Modernization" was put forth as the new priority of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to enable it to cope with "external threats". Ramos and the other reactionaries failed to anticipate either the victory of the Second Great Rectification Movement or the extreme volatility of a financial and commercial upswing based on speculative capital.

Estrada's Oplan Makabayan once again raises "counter-insurgency" as the top priority of the AFP and the Philippine National Police (PNP), sets aside "modernization", brusquely maligned and terminated the peace talks, is quickly expanding the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) anew and has intensified military offensives to "suppress" the revolutionary movement. AFP-PNP and CAFGU forces have been widely deployed in NPA guerrilla fronts. Surveillance, suppression and

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terrorism against the revolutionary and progressive forces have been intensified in the countryside and cities.

Civilian agencies of the reactionary state, reactionary and pseudo-progressive NGOs (*non-governmental organizations*) as well as socio-economic projects are being used in the military, intelligence and psychological operations of OPMAK. A separate AFP machinery for "psychological operations" and news and mass media manipulation has been formed. The machinery for conducting the "legal offensive" including the reactionary courts has also been strengthened to criminalize various forms of revolutionary and progressive resistance, harass and entrap revolutionaries and progressives and cover up fascist abuses of human rights.

As with the Oplan Lambat-Bitag and Oplan Kaisaganaan series, military campaigns and operations against the NPA revolve around the concept of triad operations: civic-military operations or CMO, intelligence and military operations. The overall campaign and operational methodology known as "clear, hold, consolidate and develop" or CHCD remains.

In reaction to the extensive and intensified guerrilla warfare being waged by the NPA, OPMAK puts a lot of stress on the training, formation and utilization of relatively small and special counter-guerrilla units (Scout Rangers and Special Forces). Military operations in the countryside, although not as large-scale nor as prolonged as the brigade-size campaigns that characterized Lambat-Bitag, are intensive and escalating.

Aside from subverting the peace talks, OPMAK, in the short span of its existence, has exacerbated the situation of the people in the countryside and cities. It has led to the more rampant and intense abuse of human rights, especially of the poor in the countryside

and cities. Extrajudicial killings, torture, illegal searches and arrests, food blockades, abuses against women and other forms of fascist atrocities have grown in number and have even worsened. Legal progressive organizations and personalities in urban areas are hounded and suppressed.

The intensifying repression and violence against the revolutionary and progressive forces coincide with the intensifying mass media suppression and the US-Estrada regime's efforts to push for greater restrictions on democratic rights. The reactionary, puppet and fascist schemes of the US-Estrada regime, including OPMAK, are rapidly aggravating social conflicts and the political crisis of the semicolonial and semifeudal system. They also rapidly expose and isolate the US-Estrada regime as a regime of the worst minions of the despised Marcos fascist dictatorship.

### **Intensify guerrilla warfare and the mass movement**

There is nothing in Oplan Makabayan's concept and strategy that should surprise the revolutionary movement. The oplan is a summation of obsolete fantasies about destroying the Party's political structure in the countryside and cities and a sterile formula of fascist aggression against the people.

The revolutionary movement gained strength during the US-Marcos dictatorship despite fascist attacks. US imperialism's low intensity conflict strategy was not able to deter its advance. The total war policy and the intensified psychological warfare of the Aquino and Ramos regimes did not hinder the revolutionary movement's ideological, political, organizational and military development.

The Party and the NPA are in a position to further intensify guerrilla warfare. There are 81 guerrilla fronts nationwide with sufficient strength to firmly confront and frustrate OPMAK. They have the capability to launch tactical offensives and advance political campaigns against the oplan's fascist objectives. Above all, the revolutionary forces are armed with knowledge on the specific conditions of their areas of responsibility to overcome the oplan.

The terror that Oplan Makabayan will sow will stoke the fires of the people's burning anger. OPMAK will surely be vanquished and relegated to the dustbins of history. **AB**

## **Launch tactical offensives, advance the mass movement**

**S**tarting mid-1998, fascist military and police forces have been massively deployed in Southern Tagalog. Aside from the 4<sup>th</sup> Special Forces, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Scout Ranger Battalion has also been assigned to the region. The battalions under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division have likewise been deployed to Southern Tagalog full force, in addition to the entire First Marine Brigade that is currently enforcing Oplan Galugad in Palawan. Organic forces of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Mobile Group have remained intact.

Aside from the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) regular troops, Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Units (CAFGU) and the Civilian Volunteers Organization are being formed and expanded. In accordance with the US-Estrada regime's current counterrevolutionary scheme Oplan Makabayan, the Department of National Defense has raised the 1999 budget allocation for the CAFGU to P870 million (from P512 million in 1998).

Moreover, the AFP and PNP have expanded and strengthened their informer networks in barrios, communities, factories, schools and other population centers. Overlapping AFP and PNP intelligence units in the region are building their respective network of informers at various levels.

Under Oplan Makabayan, the intensification of counterrevolution in Southern Tagalog has been identified as the number one priority. The region is considered to have special significance because it is adjacent to the national capital and is an ideal place for the revolutionary movement to launch its national propaganda. The region has also had a leading role in advancing guerrilla

warfare and the mass movement.

**T**he revolutionary movement in Southern Tagalog is aware of the implications of OPMK's concentrated attack in the region. It will resolutely resist the enemy's counterrevolutionary scheme by intensifying tactical offensives and the mass movement along the line of waging extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare based on ever-expanding and ever-deepening mass support.

The New People's Army (NPA) and the revolutionary masses suffered several hardships in the conduct of revolutionary work because of the oplan, which was begun in 1998. Violations of the people's human rights have intensified. The latest incident involves the abduction of three farmers from Maragondon, Cavite on July 14. The victims have yet to be surfaced by the military. Noel Barrientos and Ruel Landicho, members of the Kalipunan ng Makabayang Mindoreño, were also illegally arrested on July 23 in Oriental Mindoro.

Tactical offensives and the mass movement have in fact intensified in the region despite the onslaught of the AFP and PNP's military offensives in guerrilla zones and fronts and against progressive forces in the urban areas of Southern Tagalog.

Since 1998, more than 30 tactical offensives have been launched in the entire region, including sparrow operations, ambushes, raids and sniping. Among them are the tactical offensives launched this July in Romblon and Marinduque, the first military actions of the NPA in the two provinces. Confiscated in these offensives were 35 firearms of various caliber. Twenty-three enemy targets composed of AFP, PNP and CAFGU forces as well as armed goons of landlords and other bad elements were

killed and 10 were wounded.

Antifeudal struggles are also advancing, especially in the provinces of Quezon, Laguna and Occidental Mindoro. People's protests against quarrying and mining are widespread. Different forms of protests and mass struggles are being militantly advanced against rapidly worsening fascist abuses and other human rights violations.

Moreover, the resurgence of the NPA's tactical offensives in other regions, especially in Southern and Northeastern Mindanao and in Central Visayas has divided the attention and forces of the AFP. Just recently, the AFP high command was compelled to shift forces in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao as it scrambled to put a lid on the intensification of the NPA's guerrilla warfare and the outburst of mass protests and struggles. The outbreak of large-scale fighting between the AFP and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front also remains imminent.

The revolutionary movement in Southern Tagalog firmly believes that Oplan Makabayan will suffer ignominious defeat and reap the profound hatred of the people. The movement in the region abides by the long revolutionary tradition of the people of Southern Tagalog; on the consolidation of the Party and the movement under the Second Great Rectification Movement; on the ever-expanding and ever-strengthening support of the people who could no longer endure their extreme exploitation and oppression at the hands of the reactionary ruling class; and on the continued all-out and steadfast advance of the armed revolution in different parts of the archipelago. **AB**

## Cruel impact on the fisheries sector

**The image cast by Philippine fisheries is an image of crisis. Due to the policies of liberalization and deregulation, foreign monopoly capitalists in connivance with the local comprador bourgeoisie and big landlords have intensified their onslaught on the sector. Big foreign and local capitalist fishermen rake in millions in the face of the intensifying destitution of poor fisherfolk and fisheries workers. Meanwhile, where there used to be bountiful fish harvests, the same evil policies that favor the foreign and local ruling classes have reduced annual yields. This further exposes the regime's much vaunted "food security" slogan for the sick joke that it is. All this begets widespread unrest—unrest that leads to the revolutionary and militant solidarity and resistance of the masses of fisherfolk.**

The Philippines has a large and significant fisheries sector because of the country's archipelagic character. The country has up to eight million fisherfolk, who account for almost 10% of the population. Fisheries and grains farming comprise the twin pillars of the local economy's primary sector.

The country's seas and rivers are among the world's richest in fish and other aquatic resources. The Philippines ranks 11<sup>th</sup> worldwide in the volume of fish caught. It is second only to Indonesia in the volume of tuna caught in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia. It is also one of the leading suppliers of tuna to the US. It is the world's leading producer of seaweed and other aquatic plants.

But despite the wealth of its rivers and seas, more than half (about 4.3 million) of Filipino fisherfolk are at the bottom 30% of the population in terms of income. Ninety-five percent (95%) of this number are poor fisherfolk who, like the rest of the peasant masses, suffer feudal and semifeudal exploitation at the hands of merchants and the big comprador bourgeoisie.

There are three strata within the fisheries sector. The first is comprised of big commercial fishermen who own modern fishing vessels and big aquafarms and who often have foreign business partners. The middle stratum is comprised of fisherfolk who own motorized boats and other fishing gear that are moderate in size and capacity. Poor fisherfolk who do not have their own fishing boats or own small, usually non-motorized dug-out canoes and use inferior nets and other fishing gear, comprise the lowest stratum.

The situation of poor fisherfolk and the country's entire fisheries sector has been worsening since the '70s with the onslaught of liberalization and deregulation. Through these policies, the reactionary government has systematically favored the interests of foreign and big capitalist fishermen and suppressed the rights of poor fisherfolk.

### Liberalization and deregulation: Added burden to fisherfolk

The Marcos dictatorship implemented "partial deregulation" in 1972 by opening Philippine fisheries to foreigners and prioritizing direct foreign investment in the sector. "Free trade" was also approved and all tariffs on the importation of fish and related products were abolished under the RP-Japan Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation. In 1980, the World Bank imposed full deregulation in fisheries as a condition for foreign loans.

Consequently, the government phased out its subsidies to small and middle fisherfolk. Corporate fishfarming was encouraged along with joint export-import ventures. Even fishlanding ports and refrigeration plants were "leased" to foreigners. These changes paved the way for the full-blown liberalization and deregulation of the sector in the '80s.

Under Ramos, the export orientation of the fisheries sector was further emphasized. Incentives were provided for commercial fishing and aquaculture while small-scale fish capture in municipal waters was systematically suppressed.

Accordingly, commercial trawlers (those weighing more than three tons) previously banned from municipal waters now virtually lord it over the fishing grounds of the poor. With their gigantic nets, these trawlers leave hardly any fish for the poor fisherfolk. There are 3,000 commercial trawlers currently marauding the various municipal fishing grounds in the country.

The scope of Fishpond Lease Agreements (FLA) has also been widened. FLA holders are granted the right to convert shores and communal fishing grounds into private concessions for aquafarming for 50 to 75 years. Hundreds of thousands of fisherfolk and farmers who used to benefit from these lands and waters are thereby deprived of their rights and livelihood. At present, there are 3,705 FLA holders controlling an estimated 64,530 hectares nationwide. There are also 2,784



applications for FLAs currently being processed.

### **Aquafarming: Flawed sense of priorities**

Despite the destructiveness of commercial aquaculture, the reactionary government considers it its top priority. Thirty-nine (39) areas in eight regions nationwide have been classified as Aquaculture Management Areas—the equivalent of Key Production Areas in farming.

In 1988, the reactionary congress passed RA 7881, exempting more than 800,000 hectares of fishponds and prawn farms from distribution under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. The law also affects more than 700,000 fisherfolk and some 200,000 workers in aquaculture.

The majority of big aquafarms are owned either by foreign or local corporations or by big landlords. They control an estimated 77% of brackish water fishponds (which comprise 94% of the total area occupied by aquafarms in the country). One of the biggest aquafarm owners, RA 7881 proponent Rep. James Chiongbian, owns 200 hectares of fishponds in Bulacan and Sarangani. When RA 7881 was enacted, there were at least 25 congressmen who owned or held stocks in big fishpond or prawn farm ventures or were involved in other fisheries-related businesses.

As what transpires in the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses, the expansion of commercial aquaculture causes widespread hunger and loss of livelihood among fisherfolk and farmers. In one instance, hundreds of fishing and farming families were deprived of subsistence and 400 hectares of mangrove forest were destroyed when Dole Philippines, a gigantic multinational agribusiness corporation, set up an aquafarm in Kiamba, Sarangani. Before this, Dole already owned a 143-hectare prawn farm in Cotabato City.

The reactionary government's restrictions on municipal fishing and its prioritization of aquafarming are patently pro-imperialist and anti-masses in design. For one, the propagation of imported bio-engineered fish species in aquafarms requires massive importation of feeds from foreign agribusiness corporations. Aquafarms moreover monopolize or control water resources that should be communally owned by local residents.

Widespread commercial aquafarming breeds another long-term disaster: the suppression of fish propagation due to the destruction of mangrove forests and coral reefs that

serve as spawning grounds and habitats for fish. According to the government's own statistics, the volume of fish capture has been dwindling since 1996 while aquaculture production has been rising. Under the Ramos regime's Medium-Term Philippine Development Program, annual production growth targets for aquaculture and commercial fish capture were set at 5.8% and 4%, respectively. Meanwhile, the target growth rate for municipal fishing was limited to a mere 2% annually.



### **Crisis in the fisheries sector**

While municipal fish capture remains as the sector's leading form of production, the volume of fish caught in municipal waters has been falling by an average of 2.2% annually from 1990 to 1995. The share of municipal fishing in overall production has also been reduced, from 50.94% in 1980 to only 36% in 1995. Thus, notwithstanding the richness and potential of the country's fishing grounds, the Philippines remains one of the leading importers of frozen sardines, salmon and tuna for local canneries and of fish meal for the local animal feeds industry.

Government suppression of their livelihood has also led to a reduction in the number of municipal fisherfolk from 773,042 in 1986 to only 675,677 in 1995 (reflecting a 13% decline over a period of nine years). Displaced fisherfolk continue to suffer intense exploitation and oppression, however, even as they shift to other means of livelihood in the city or in the countryside.

In 1997, the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) or RA 8435 was passed, reinforcing the pro-imperialist and anti-masses fisheries policies of previous regimes. The law's foremost proponent, Edgardo Angara, has been appointed Secretary of Agriculture by Joseph Estrada. This underscores the Estrada regime's determination to push even further the limits of liberalization and deregulation in the fisheries sector.

This can only worsen the crisis engulfing Philippine fisheries and the country's entire agricultural sector. The masses of fisherfolk shall be forced to suffer further loss of livelihood, more intense hunger and greater hardship.

Condemned to misery, their only recourse is to fight. **AB**

# Another bane to farmers

**T**here is a new name for legalized landgrabbing: Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco's "corporate scheme", which the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) has declared as Administrative Order No. 9 (AO 9). The order dovetails the government's Agricultural and Fisheries Modernization Act (AFMA) which entices big local and foreign capitalists to take full ownership of and profit from, the Philippines' natural resources and exploit the Filipino people.

The "corporate scheme" coupled with AFMA exacerbate the intense poverty already afflicting the peasantry. They intensify the feudal and semifeudal exploitation and oppression of the peasantry and enable big comprador-landlords like Cojuangco to accelerate their accumulation of wealth.

AO 9 and AFMA are being foisted on the peasantry even as the government, a puppet of US imperialism and a representative of the Marcos cronies, auctions off the country's lands and forests to be owned 100% by foreigners, allows the influx of cheap imports and brutally grabs land from farmers.

## The "corporate scheme": a review

The "corporate scheme" involves the establishment of "farmers' cooperatives" that are supervised by and tightly linked to a corporation. Farmers belonging to the "cooperative" are in charge of tilling the land that they supposedly own while their "partner" corporation takes charge of capital investments, technical expertise, equipment and most of all, of controlling the business and using the land. This has been vaunted as a means, and a model one at that, of distributing land to landless farmers under the government's sham land reform program.

The "corporate scheme" was introduced as another pretense at land reform even as landlords' interests are being flagrantly upheld to the detriment of the peasant masses. It is nothing but Danding Cojuangco's newest label for the old "stock-sharing scheme" initiated by his cousins from Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac. Danding mimicked the scheme in one of his deals involving over 4,000 hectares of land in Negros.

To build a "corporate", landlords begin by establishing a corporation to administer their landholdings. They then distribute imaginary "shares" of the corporation to a landlord-organized "cooperative" composed of their tenant-farmers to make them appear as "co-owners" of the land they till. The farmers are also promised a share in the profits after harvest. But with the comprador-landlords retaining control over the "partnership", it becomes easy enough for them to manipulate figures on harvests and profits so that the farmers gain very little, if at all.

## Danding: Scourge to farmers

The implementation of Danding Cojuangco's "corporate scheme" proves the existence of a conspiracy between him and the US-Estrada regime for the recovery of Cojuangco's ill-gotten wealth and his full return to power. The scheme is also in preparation for Danding's plans to catapult himself as the foremost partner of multinational agribusiness and mining corporations that shall swoop down on the country like birds of prey once Estrada succeeds in obliterating the few remaining constitutional restrictions on foreign business.

But the anti-farmer character of the "corporate scheme" continues to rear its ugly head.

In Negros, farmers who were supposed to have received land "given away for free" by Danding have come forward to belie this claim. They have produced papers showing that ECJ & Sons Agricultural Enterprises, Inc., (the Cojuangco-owned corporation set up for one of Danding's "stock-sharing" schemes involving 4,631 hectares of land in Negros) was actually obliging them to pay for the land at P350,000 per hectare for a period of 10 years.

Cojuangco's partner in crime in deceiving the farmers is no less than the reactionary government. Last year, Antonio Cerilles, secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), granted Cojuangco the rights to 6,400 hectares of agricultural land in Pinggot, Ilog, Negros Occidental. According to official records, the land was to be used for a fruit production and woodpulp processing-related government project. For this, the Estrada regime had allotted P1 billion in public funds. In truth, Danding's

co-contractor is Yves Saint Laurent (YSL), a French perfume manufacturer. The land is to be planted with ylang-ylang (a tree known for its fragrant flowers). Danding had offered farmers living on the land a P140 daily wage and a 30% share in Agro-Fruit Corporation (also Danding's), and threatened them with eviction if they refused his offer.

The project has worsened the farmers' misery. Because YSL has acquired a patent for the exclusive right to plant, propagate, process and sell ylang-ylang, it has deprived everyone else—including the poor farmers of Barangay Pinggot—from using ylang-ylang as a traditional herbal medicine. Instead of distributing land and assisting farmers in upgrading their agricultural infrastructure, the Estrada government shells out massive funds to strengthen Danding's monopoly control over Negros. Cojuangco's appointment of Nehemias dela Cruz, a "rebel returnee", to head the Agro-Fruit Corp. completes the picture. Dela Cruz was primarily responsible for "convincing" the farmers to work for "Boss Danding." When the farmers protested, Cerilles merely shrugged this off, claiming that the protesting farmers were not members of the "Pinggot AgroForestry Development Association", a "farmers' cooperative" organized by Danding.

In a related case, some 7,000 farmers in Kabankalan, Negros Occidental are being evicted from the government-owned Negros Occidental Agricultural College (NOAC) to give way to Tri-Planters, Inc. (TPI), a private company that plants coffee trees for the giant agribusiness corporation Nestlé. The farmers have a reforestation contract with the DENR (by virtue of Proclamation 459), a fact that has been ignored by the agency. Instead, the DENR ruled in favor of a 10-year lease contract it signed with TPI involving 1,000 hectares of land. The affected farmers are now being unceremoniously ordered to leave the area.

Even schools have not been spared by the sharp talons of the "corporate scheme". It has been revealed that Nestlé would take charge of training NOAC students for their practicum and supply them with coffee seeds for this purpose. The students are thereby exploited for business without pay while in training. Nestlé is also assured of a reservoir of skilled workers for its subsidiaries—such as the 500-hectare United Equity Corporation, a plantation owned by Roberto Benedicto, also a former crony of Marcos.

### **Estrada's continuing deception**

The "corporate scheme" is a desperate attempt on the part of the Estrada regime to conceal the

intensifying feudal and semifeudal exploitation of the peasantry under the reactionary system:

*Continuous conversion of agricultural lands.* Estrada recently ordered a moratorium on the conversion of agricultural lands to "ensure food security". But in the same vein, he is zealously pushing AO9, AFMA and related policies that give local and foreign capitalists full license to destroy productive lands and forests to grow cash crops and open mining, real estate development and other businesses.

As early as 1998, more than half of the 2.3 million hectares of rice lands nationwide had already been subjected to land use conversion. This puts into ridicule the Department of Agriculture's target of turning the country into the number one rice exporter by 1999. In fact, in 1998, cheap agricultural products had to be imported to make up for shortfalls in production.

*Widespread landgrabbing.* The antipeople administration also claims that it would accomplish its target for land distribution under CARP within a few years. The biggest local and foreign real estate businessmen, however, like House Speaker Manuel Villar, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and the Ayala family and real estate conglomerates such as the Manila Southcoast Development Inc., Sta.

Lucia Realty and Berenguer Estate, have been grabbing agricultural lands with impunity. Also counted among the leading landgrabbers are the most avaricious former Marcos cronies and multinationals. Meanwhile, in Negros Occidental, Bukidnon, Samar, Laguna, Batangas, Bulacan and other parts of the country, more and more Certificates of Land Ownership previously awarded by DAR under CARP are being revoked by the same agency to pave the way for landgrabbing.

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**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
DANDING COJUANGCO'S  
"CORPORATIVE SCHEME"  
PROVES THE EXISTENCE OF  
A CONSPIRACY BETWEEN HIM  
AND THE US-ESTRADA  
REGIME FOR THE RECOVERY  
OF COJUANGCO'S ILL-  
GOTTEN WEALTH AND HIS  
FULL RETURN TO POWER.**

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*Privatizing NIA and emasculating the NFA.* Estrada and Angara allegedly plan to pour funds into the agricultural sector to strengthen and upgrade its infrastructure. Instead, Estrada has reduced the scope of the National Food Authority's (NFA) functions and has privatized the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

The NFA has been relegated to monitoring the price of rice and corn and has been stripped of its role of streamlining the distribution of the country's leading grains nationwide. This has already resulted in the spoilage of tons of corn in Mindanao.

The privatization of the NIA led to the dismissal of its employees. Instead of upgrading irrigation systems for the benefit of poor farmers, the NIA's new management is prioritizing golf courses and cash crop plantations.

The pro-landlord Estrada regime's deceptions can only lead to its further exposure and self-destruction. Time will come when it will no longer be able to worm its way out of the depth of the crisis of its own making and will have no choice but to face a people demanding retribution, with the peasant masses as the main force.

Far from allowing themselves to fall for every deceptive policy, scheme or project foisted on them by the government, the farmers are learning to rely on their own strength and advance along the path of revolutionary struggle. As workers, peasants and all other oppressed classes and sectors of society link arms, it is not only the realization of genuine land reform that becomes a certainty, but also of thoroughgoing social change. **AB**

## Cartels:

### Monopoly in the sugar industry and other leading crop lines

*Local and foreign capitalists are having a ball and are raking in a fortune because of the US-Estrada regime's fervid implementation of the imperialist policies of liberalization, deregulation and privatization. These policies imposed by the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation and the General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade-World Trade Organization are pushing the Filipino people deeper into the mire of deprivation, hunger and poverty.*

**S**candalous is the word to describe the particular abuse perpetrated by sugar cartels in connivance with the Sugar Regulatory Authority with every sudden fluctuation in the world market. Time and again, news leaks out about anomalies involving sugar hoarding by cartels.

Nationwide, the monopoly of the sugar industry is being further entrenched. The reactionary government ingratiate itself with and coddles, the bureaucrats, businessmen and landlords who control these cartels.

Instead of investing capital to modernize their own sugar plantations, comprador-landlords choose to import processed sugar. They gain more profit this way because they monopolize the distribution and pricing of imported sugar.

The following has become commonplace: About 2,000 hectares of sugar land in Nasugbu, Batangas were put to waste because landlords Roxas, Palico and Carmen refused to buy the farmers' sugarcane harvest. The farmers were forced to sell their produce, which was already losing sweetness, for 10 times less than its original value. The landlords could easily spurn sugar sold by small planters because of the bigger profits to be had from importation. Sometimes, landlords buy bags of sugar at extremely low prices, only to sell these at twice the original cost years later.

Recently, the Estrada regime allowed the cartels to import 154,000 metric tons of sugar, 242% more than the 45,000 metric tons allowed by law. Hundreds of thousands of farmworkers lost their jobs in Negros and Luzon because of the influx of imported sugar, aside from the fact that small planters went bankrupt.

Congress also passed the Agricultural Tariffication Act which allows foreign agribusiness corporations to tie up with local comprador-landlords in expanding plantations. This law supposedly



aims to help small planters become more competitive in the world market. In truth, this law further allows comprador-landlords to grab lands, thus strengthening the monopoly control of a few landlords over the sugar industry. Even lands that have been distributed under CARP are affected.

Big landlords like the Yulos, Zobels, Roxases, Dolors and Manzano-Rubio Lopezes comprise the cartel that plants and processes sugarcane in Cavite, Batangas and Laguna. They deliberately cut down on sugar production in their own factories in favor of converting their sugar plantations to other uses such as real estate development, agroforestry and many more. The widespread conversion of agricultural lands is integral to the Calabarzon project. Oftentimes, it is the Department of Agrarian Reform that revokes the Certificates of Land Ownership Award that it had already distributed to farmers.

According to the National Federation of Sugar Workers, landlords owning more than 50 hectares of sugar land comprise only 4% of all sugar planters. Nevertheless, they control 78.6% of the more than half a million hectares of sugar land all over the Philippines. In Negros alone, 9,000 hectares already covered by CARP were violently reclaimed by landlords.

**I**n the same way, full-blown liberalization continues to weigh down heavily on small local rice and corn planters.

The price of corn plummeted to P4 per kilo after around 300,000 metric tons of the grain in Mindanao became spoiled. Corn planters were compelled to sell at a price dictated by merchant-landlords because the National Food Authority had ceased to buy rice and corn from farmers.

Most farmers lack farming equipment and post-harvest facilities such as palay driers. This is one reason behind the spoilage of their products. Taking advantage, merchants deliberately underprice the farmers. Apart from this, local grain loses out in competition with the influx of imported rice and corn which are allowed in on a duty-free basis. Worse, as a condition for loans, the World Bank has forbidden the government from subsidizing poor farmers. The latter are thereby forced to rent farming equipment from merchant-usurers, thus pushing them deeper into the quagmire of debt. In the meantime, the unresolved problem of grain spoilage is used by the government as an excuse to call for importation anew.

As long as a reactionary state subservient to the interests of its imperialist master and protective of the feudal and semifeudal domination of the landlord class prevails, the enslavement of the peasant masses is sure to worsen. **AB**

Coco levy:

## Still Danding's brew

**U**nder the government of his henchman Estrada, Danding Cojuangco is recovering piece by piece billions of pesos worth of ill-gotten wealth. A "compromise deal" is now being cooked up so that the coco levy funds will finally fall into Cojuangco's hands.

The coco levy fund originated from taxes forcibly extracted by the Marcos dictatorship from coconut farmers from 1972 until 1983. Now estimated to be worth up to P100 billion, the fund is being administered by the United Coconut Planters Bank, which is owned by Danding.

In order to "serve the interests of the farmers", the deal calls for Cojuangco to "bequeathe" to the coconut farmers his 27% share (P40 billion) in San Miguel Corporation (SMC), in exchange for his recovery of his 20% share (P30 billion) in the company. Danding's shares in the SMC, totalling 47%, were sequestered by the government in 1986 based on evidence indicating that coco levy funds were used to buy the stocks.

Once the "deal" pushes through, Danding not only gets to pocket P30 billion; he secures his majority control over SMC. Meanwhile, P40 billion will allegedly be distributed to around 3.6 million coconut farmers. But the cunning landlord-comprador will definitely find ways to get his filthy hands on the P40 billion.

Erap and Danding's pronouncement that the "compromise deal" is "for the farmers" is merely intended to conceal the reality of the notorious crony's recovery of his ill-gotten wealth. In fact, the coconut farmers had no say in drawing up the terms of the deal now being railroaded by Malacañang and Danding.

Seen from any angle, it is the small coconut farmers who have the right to the coco levy funds. To deny them this right is to spark the fire of widespread anger and resistance. **AB**

# Celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory of the Chinese Revolution

On October 1, the Chinese people and all proletarian revolutionaries around the world, including the Communist Party of the Philippines, will commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory of the Chinese Revolution led by Comrade Mao Zedong and the Communist Party of China.

Let us use this celebration as an opportunity to review the lessons of waging the two-stage revolution in China; condemn and repudiate modern revisionism and the current monopoly bureaucrat capitalist regime in China; expose the crisis of the global capitalist system; and reaffirm the continuing correctness of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and socialism.

The democratic revolution in China led by the Communist Party of China triumphed in 1949. It liberated one-sixth of the people of the entire world from feudal exploitation and imperialist rule. It dealt a heavy blow to the global capitalist system. It inspired and enlightened oppressed peoples in different parts of the world to fight colonialism and semicolonialism and achieve national and social liberation.

The democratic people's government in China led by the proletarian dictatorship was established in 1949. The democratic revolution was consummated through the implementation of land reform and transitional policies that allowed the participation of the middle and petty bourgeoisie in the strengthening of the democratic republic.

The leadership of the Communist Party of China ensured that these policies of the democratic revolution served to pave the way for socialist revolution and construction.

From the end of the 1950s up to 1976, the Party and the several hundred million Chinese people persevered in building a socialist society in line with Marxist-Leninist principles. During this time, the Chinese people achieved advances in the political, economic, cultural and other aspects of social life.

Various attempts by the modern revisionists to overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat, reverse the victories of the Chinese revolution and restore capitalism were thwarted. Chairman Mao pointed out that the principal contradiction in socialist society is the class contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie. Under socialist society, the big bourgeoisie could regenerate through unremolded petty bourgeois elements within the Party and state who propagate modern revisionist ideas and policies that, if unrepudiated and unrectified, could eventually lead to bureaucratism, fascism and the overthrow of the proletarian dictatorship.

Thus, in order to strengthen and advance the socialist revolution, Chairman Mao enunciated the theory of

continuing revolution under proletarian dictatorship to crush modern revisionism and prevent the restoration of capitalism.

The correctness of this theory was demonstrated in practice by the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966-76 which mobilized millions upon millions in a revolutionary storm, overthrew the modern revisionists in power and defended the victories of the socialist revolution.

After Chairman Mao passed away, the modern revisionists were able to return to power through maneuvers and the direct use of counterrevolutionary violence against the proletarian dictatorship. Socialist policies were immediately reversed. The bourgeoisie were given a widening political and economic role, which opened China to imperialist exploitation. All these capitalist policies were hidden behind "socialist" phrase mongering.

Conditions in China are ripe for reigniting the revolutionary struggle led by the proletariat. Due to the policies of the modern revisionists, China has deteriorated to the status of a semicolonial state. Hundreds of millions of workers and peasants are being scourged by policies designed to attract foreign investors. Land has been reconcentrated in the hands of a few, with large tracts being transformed into export zones. The wages received by Chinese workers are the lowest in the world. Hundreds of millions are unemployed in both the cities and countryside. Vast areas of the countryside are being rocked by peasant uprisings even as workers' strikes and other forms of protests in the cities intensify.

In celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the victory of the Chinese revolution, it would be propitious to contrast the advances achieved by China in 1949-76 under proletarian dictatorship to the present crisis under bureaucrat capitalist rule. To do this, it is important to grasp the lessons of waging a two-stage revolution, especially the theories culled by Chairman Mao in his summing-up of socialist revolution and construction in China. This will serve as our weapon in exposing the mendacity of counterrevolutionary imperialist propaganda that paint present-day China as a modern country and its socialist past as primitivism.

The crisis of the global capitalist system and the consequent unbearable suffering of workers and peasants further emphasize the correctness of advancing along the path of democratic and socialist revolutions. The triumph of the Chinese revolution in 1949 continues to illumine the paths of the oppressed peoples of the world. It remains a beacon guiding us as we advance together with the resurgent and gigantic wave of democratic and socialist revolutions the world over. **AB**

## 14 FIREARMS SEIZED IN MASBATE AMBUSH

Fourteen assorted firearms were seized while four policemen were killed in an ambush by New People's Army guerrillas. Two policemen and two elements of the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit were also wounded. The ambush was launched against a nine-man team of the Philippine National Police on the morning of August 2 in Sitio Bat-og, Barangay Balite in Aroroy, Masbate. Seized were six M16s, two Garands, two .45 pistols and four .38 revolvers.

## 'SALVAGING' IN SOUTHERN MINDANAO CONDEMNED

The National Democratic Front, church groups, media personnel and others condemned another flagrant violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) perpetrated by the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Roundly condemned was the "salvaging" (summary execution) of a Communist Party cadre, a New People's Army (NPA) guerrilla and two mining company officials in Compostela Valley. According to a church-led fact-finding mission, Godofredo Guimbaolibot (Ka Paking), Rolando Jubahib (Ka JR), Edwin Asion and Mariano Diamante were abducted on the afternoon of August 2 in Barangay Ngan, Compostela by elements of the 60<sup>th</sup> IB led by Lt. Rolando Cateel. The four were aboard a Nissan pickup when arrested. Despite Ka Paking and Ka JR's clear status as hors d'combat and despite the CARHRIHL's ban on targeting civilians in the armed conflict, the four were tortured and murdered that evening along a desolate section of the Davao-Agusan highway in Barangay Tuburan, Mawab while they were supposedly being brought to the 701<sup>st</sup> Brigade headquarters.

Ka Paking was a Communist Party cadre in Southern Mindanao while Ka JR was an NPA medic. Asion, an engineer, was the operations manager of Bullex Mining while Diamante was the firm's supply officer.

The media found incredible the military's reports that Ka Paking's attempt to grab an Armalite rifle from a soldier led to the shooting of the four captives. Witnesses asserted that Ka Paking was incapable of fighting because his hands were tied behind his back from the time of his

arrest.

In related news, the Workers' Party of Belgium has extended a message of condolence and solidarity to the comrades and family of Ka Paking. The party hailed Ka Paking as a revolutionary leader who was "understanding and caring, guiding and stimulating". "We are convinced," said the party, "that the life, struggle and martyrdom of Ka Paking will have contributed a lot to making the revolution stronger, until victory."

## STRAFING, FOOD BLOCKADE IN NEGROS ORIENTAL ASSAILED

Former National Democratic Front spokesperson Frank Fernandez assailed the violation of the human rights of civilians in Negros Oriental by elements of the Philippine Army and the Citizens' Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU). In a press statement, Fernandez condemned the strafing and manhandling of civilians living in Barangay Trinidad, Guihulngan, Negros Oriental by soldiers and CAFGU elements after a firefight last August 15 that left six military troopers dead. A Red fighter was also slain in the encounter.

According to Fernandez, the soldiers strafed the house of Patricia Quirante, a resident of the barangay. Quirante's five-year-old child was wounded in the strafing. Another civilian, George Villanueva, was beaten up by the troopers. Due to the terror sowed by the Philippine Army, said Fernandez, many villagers have been forced to leave their homes. Progressive organizations in Negros Oriental have also assailed the 33<sup>rd</sup> IB for enforcing a food blockade in the villages of Hinumayan, Amomoyon and Cabulay in Guihulngan after the firefight.

**ERRATUM:** In its May-June 1999 issue, **AB** reported that a trooper from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Forces Battalion of the Philippine Army was killed and three were wounded in an ambush by the New People's Army (NPA) in Barangay Mainit, Bontoc, Mountain Province last June 21. According to the latest reports from the Leonardo Pacsi Command, the NPA unit operating in the province, five soldiers were killed and three were wounded in the ambush. The Leonardo Pacsi Command also reported that the ambush was a punitive action against the soldiers who were deployed to defend the interests of foreign mining companies in the province.